Kansas-Nebraska Act

In the year of 1853, Stephen Douglas suggested the forming of two separate territories; Kansas and Nebraska. Both of these territories sit in a place closed to slavery, by the Missouri compromise. This meant that states eventually created from this territory would come into the union as a free state. To get southern support Stephen Douglas suggested that slavery in new territories would be decided by popular sovereignty.

Sovereignty-the quality or state of being sovereign.

In action, the Kansas- Nebraska act undid the Missouri Compromise. In time the southerners wanted Kansas to enter the union as a slave state. Northerners were not in the same field. They were upset that Douglas had “betrayed” them by reopening the issue of slavery in these territories. One of the northerners of Senator Douglas’ bill said “the more I look at it the more enraged I become, It needs but little to make me and out-and-out abolitionist.”

Abolitionist-someone who was against slavery in the United States.

After a lot of debate the southern support allowed the Kansas-Nebraska act to pass in both houses of Congress. President Franklin Pierce, elected in 1852, signed the bill into law. Stephen Douglas predicted that the slavery question would be forever banished from the halls of congress as a result of the Kansas-Nebraska act. Congressed passed the Act around a year later in 1854.